working for marine services company "Signal International" in return for a promise of green cards and permanent US residency;

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take "to stop rogue recruiters"; and

(d) the time Government required to bring forward an amendment to Emigration Act, 1983, for more stringent punishment for fraudulent recruitment agencies?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (c) As per the reports received from the Indian Mission in USA, 590 Indian workers were recruited and deployed in the yards of M/s Signal International, a marine fabrication company, located at Mississippi and Texas. They had gone to US on H2B visas (Guest Workers Visa Programme) valid initially for 10 months, extendable at the discretion of the employer and the US authorities. The workers were aggrieved on account of alleged poor accomodation and amenities, deductions from their salary for accommodation, food, electricity, water and also non-fulfilment of alleged initial commitment of permanent residency status. The workers have alleged that they have paid Rs. 6—9 lakhs at the time of recruitment as commission to the recruiting firm in India on the promise of long term employment/permanent residency/ green card in USA.

The Indian Mission in USA has approached the US Government to conduct a detailed investigation on the complaints of Indian workers and take remedial measures. The Indian Mission has also taken steps to withhold visas from the main US recruiters involved to prevent them from entering India to conduct recruiting operations.

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has suspended the licenses of M/s Dewan Consultants and M/s. S. Mansur & Co., Mumbai, black listed the foreign employer and is also initiating legal action against the Recruiting Agent for violation of Emigration Act, 1983.

Further, action is taken against recruiting agents on receipt of complaints by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs under the provision of Emigration Act, 1983, leading to suspension and cancellation of their registration certificate/license in serious cases. In respect of unregistered recruiting agents, the complaints are referred to concerned State Government/ Police Authorities/Protectors of Emigrants for investigation and action for violation of Section 10 of Emigration Act 1983 and other provisions of the law as appropriate. in respect of complaint against the foreign employer (FE), FE is placed in the Prior Approval Category (Black list) and as a consequence is not allowed to recruit workers from India.

(d) Action has already been initiated for comprehesnive amendment of the Emigration Act, 1983.

Selection of more districts under BRGF Scheme

3317. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under active consideration of the Union Government to conduct a survey to select more districts in the country to be covered under the Backward Regions Grant Fund Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof particularly Azamgah district in Uttar Pradesh alongwith the criteria followed, State-wise; and

(c) by when such districts are expected to be identified and benefited under the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal at present to include more districts under BRGF Programme.

(b) The 250 districts selected for inclusion under the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme comprise: (a) districts identified as backward in the report of the Inter-Ministry Task Group (IMTG) on Redressing Growing Regional Imbalances constituted by the Planning Commission, (b) the districts already covered under the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY), (c) the districts covered under the erstwhile National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) and (d) all 200 districts covered under the first phase of implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP).

Azamgarh district is one of the 34 districts of Uttar Pradesh covered under the BRGF Programme. The list of all the 34 districts is at the Statement (*See* below).

(c) Does not arise.

Statement

List of districts covered under Backward Regions Grant Fund in Uttar Pradesh

1. Ambedkar Nagar
2. Azamgarh
3. Bahraich
4. Balrampur
5. Banda
6. Barabanki
7. Basti
8. Budaun
9. Chandauli
10. Chitrakoot
11. Etah
12. Farrukhabad
13. Fatehpur
14. Gonda
15. Gorakhpur
16. Hamirpur
17. Hardoi
18. Jalaun
19. Jaunpur
20. Kaushambi
21. Kushinagar
22. Lakhimpur Kheri

23. Lalitpur
24. Maharajganj
25. Mahoba
26. Mirzapur
27. Pratapgrah
28. Raebareli
29. Sant Kabir Nagar
30. Shravasti
31. Siddharthanagar
32. Sitapur
33. Sonebhadra
34. Unnao

Computerisation of Panchayats

3318. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to provide adequate funds for computerisation of panchayats;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Keeping in view the strategic importance of computerisation at the Gram Panchayat level, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj had constituted an Expert Group in June, 2007 under the Chairmanship of Director General, National Informatics Centre to assess the current and future Information Technology (IT) programmes of the Ministry, to recommend on the most cost-effective technologies for reaching IT to the Gram Panchayats, the use of IT for effectively building capacities of Panchayati Raj Institutions through distance learning, and cost implications of the recommendations. The Expert Group has estimated the project cost to the tune of Rs. 6700 crores and a time-line of three years. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is in the process of finalizing the scheme for the approval of Government. The actual cost of the project will be known once the scheme is finalized and approved.

Necessity of sanction to continue departmental enquiry

†3319. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Supreme Court has held that sanction of Governor is not necessary to continue departmental enquiry against public servant;

(b) if so, the details of such cases which are pending due to the sanction not accorded by the Governor, State-wise; and

(c) the details of proceedings of departmental enquiry against Central Government and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.